

VZCZCXYZ0000
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHBO #2835/01 1172019
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 272019Z APR 07
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4361
INFO RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY 7503
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY 8920
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ APR 8629
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA PRIORITY 4979
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO PRIORITY 5605

C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 002835

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/26/2017
TAGS: [ECON](#) [ETRD](#) [PHUM](#) [PTER](#) [CO](#)
SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER ARAUJO MEETING WITH WHA PDAS
SHAPIRO

Classified By: Political Counselor John S. Creamer
Reason: 1.4 (b,d)

Summary

¶1. (C) Foreign Minister Fernando Araujo told WHA PDAS Charles Shapiro the GOC considered the bilateral Free Trade Agreement to be the "economic arm of Plan Colombia," whose ratification was key for Colombia to continue its success in fighting terrorism, reducing violence, and addressing social problems. Colombia's vision was of a Pacific Coast group of countries linked through interlocking free trade accords and committed to further economic integration. Colombia would continue to be patient with Ecuador, who would be invited to participate in the group. On human rights, Araujo stressed GOC success in lowering substantially allegations of violence. He said the ELN's military weakness suggested it would consider a peace deal with the GOC, and reiterated that the GOC would make no deal with the FARC on an humanitarian accord that excluded the 3 American citizen hostages. End summary.

¶2. On April 18, PDAS Shapiro met with Foreign Minister Araujo in the Palacio San Carlos in Bogota. CDA Drucker, Polcouns, and D/polcouns (notetaker) also attended. Araujo was accompanied by Vice Foreign Minister Nieto and USA Office Director Cortes.

Free Trade Agreement: Economic Arm of Plan Colombia

¶3. (C) Araujo said the bilateral Free Trade Agreement (CTPA) with the U.S. was the "economic arm of Plan Colombia," whose ratification was essential for Colombia to promote long term economic stability and help resolve long-standing social problems. Colombian companies that export to the U.S. observed higher labor and environmental standards than those focused on the domestic market, demonstrating that free trade would boost, not lower, such standards. Araujo told Shapiro the GOC had a strategy to persuade U.S. members of Congress to ratify the CTPA. President Uribe would visit Washington, D.C. May 2-3. Valle Governor Angelino Garzon, a member of the opposition Polo Democratico and a former union leader, had agreed to visit the U.S. to rally support. The GOC planned to ask Bogota Mayor Lucho Garzon (also from the Polo) to travel to the U.S as well. The GOC had also identified businesspeople in Florida who benefited from trade with Colombia and would enlist their support on the Hill.

¶4. (C) Araujo emphasized Colombia was working with Peru,

Mexico, Chile and the Central Americans to build a Pacific Coast grouping of countries linked through interlocking free trade agreements and committed to further economic integration. Recent visits by Peru's Alan Garcia ("our relations with Peru couldn't be better") and Chile's Michelle Bachelet had advanced the project; Uribe and Garcia agreed to deepen economic integration beyond Andean Community obligations, and Bachelet appeared interested in cooperating.

Ecuador: Patience and Respect

15. (C) Araujo told Shapiro the GOC would invite Ecuador (along with Bolivia) to join the Pacific Coast grouping, but did not expect Presidents Correa or Morales to accept. The GOE had a short term vision focused on ATPDEA extension. Following his referendum victory, Correa appeared "triumphalist, messianic, and vain." He cited a Correa proposal at the Margarita Island energy summit, in which the international community would pay Ecuador USD 5 billion to leave oil in the Amazon rather than exploit it, as evidence of Correa's lack of realism. Araujo regarded Ecuador's principal concern as ensuring political and economic stability and highlands/coastal integration. For its part, he said the GOC would stick to a positive, patient agenda with Ecuador, leaving space for Correa to make corrections to his approach to Colombia. Shapiro noted the possibility of Secretary Rice visiting Ecuador, which Araujo welcomed.

SIPDIS

Margarita Island Energy Summit

16. (C) Araujo characterized President Chavez' conduct at Margarita as constructive, even on biofuel production, which he had previously criticized. Araujo credited Brazilian President Lula with helping to neutralize Chavez. He said Venezuela--Colombia's second leading trade partner--had agreed to continue existing Andean Community preferential trade rules for 5 years. Previously, Chavez had said Venezuela would continue to extend such preference for only two years. Colombia would make it a priority to negotiate a bilateral trade agreement with Venezuela during this period. Araujo said Chavez had also suggested, without offering details, a trans-Andean gas pipeline. Araujo said there was no concrete nuclear energy proposal discussed at Margarita.

Violence, Human Rights

17. (C) Araujo said Colombia had suffered from violence for many years, affecting numerous families. He had been kidnapped by the FARC and held for 6 years; Vice President Santos was kidnapped by Pablo Escobar for a year; the FARC assassinated President Uribe's father; the FARC murdered former President Gaviria's sister last year during a botched kidnapping attempt, and former President Pastrana's mother in law was also murdered. Violence against labor figures was unacceptable but should be seen in this context. Araujo said the GOC had a USD 30 million protection program to ensure the safety of unionists, journalists, and human rights activists. Only one labor leader had been killed so far in 2007, a major improvement over prior years. Paramilitary forces were behind many such attacks, and their demobilization augured well for labor leaders' safety.

18. (C) In response to Shapiro's question, Araujo highlighted GOC progress on human rights, saying allegations against the security forces were sharply down over previous years. Human rights cases involving the military were being heard in the civilian justice system. He said Prosecutor General Mario Iguaran would visit Washington, D.C. in late April to share the results of his office's efforts. Paramilitaries had been

the biggest violators of human rights, and their demobilization has already made a difference in reducing violence and other human rights violations. Shapiro emphasized the importance of addressing old cases as well, ensuring justice for victims.

ELN Talks and FARC Prospects

¶9. (C) Araujo said the GOC-ELN peace talks would soon resume in Havana. The ELN was "slippery and difficult," but the GOC would make every effort to secure a cease-fire and release of ELN kidnap victims. Cuba had been helpful in pressuring the ELN, which faced military pressure from both the GOC and the FARC. The GOC's position on humanitarian talks with the FARC had not changed. The GOC supported the international community's December 2004 proposal for a security zone cleared of FARC and GOC forces, and insisted that released FARC prisoners do not return to the ranks. He insisted any FARC deal would have to include the 3 American citizens held for over 4 years.

¶10. (U) PDAS Shapiro did not have an opportunity to clear this message.
Drucker